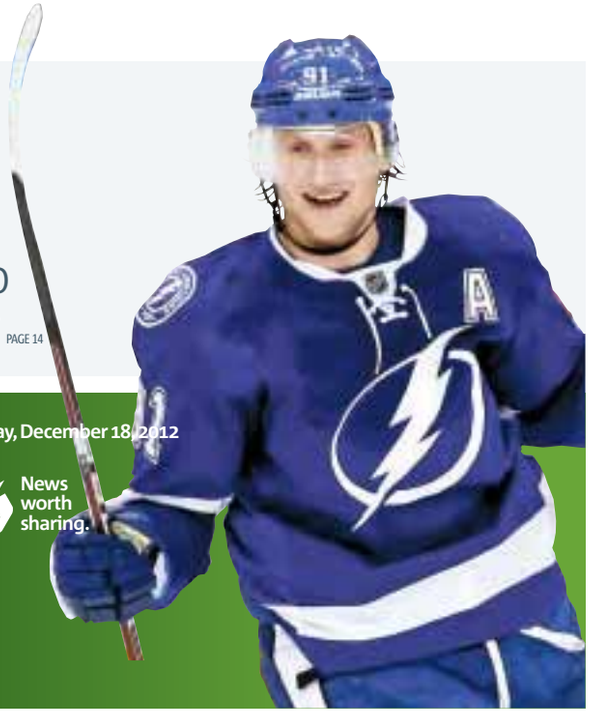
Merry moderation

Don't throw your fitness and diet routine out the window. Our tips will help you get through the holidays without busting your belt PAGE 11

PUTTING ON A GAME FACE

TAMPA BAY'S STEVEN STAMKOS IS TRYING TO MAKE THE BEST OF A LONG, LONG LOCKOUT PAGE 14



SASKATOON metro®

Tuesday, December 18, 2012

News worth sharing.

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A solemn remembrance for INNOCENCE LOST

Barbara Wells, of Shelton, Conn., holds her daughter Olivia, 3, as she pays her respects Monday at one of the makeshift memorials for the victims of the Sandy Hook Elementary School shooting in Newtown, Conn. More coverage, page 6.

MARY ALTAFFER/THE ASSOCIATED PRESS

School safety a priority in Saskatchewan

Newtown tragedy. In the aftermath of last week's mass shooting in Connecticut, Sask.'s school administrators stress the importance of preparedness

MORGAN MODJESKI
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Days after 26 people were shot and killed at Sandy Hook Elementary School in Newtown, Conn., school administrators in Saskatchewan say Friday's tragedy was a strong reminder about the importance of school safety.

Janet Foord, president of the Saskatchewan School Boards Association (SSBA), says student safety is a top priority.

"After Friday's and some of the other major shootings, we don't take anything without a serious thought," said Foord.

"We look at safety quite seriously because nobody is immune to violence.... It's a tragedy that we don't ever want to see happen in our schools," an emotional Foord added.

She explained there are a number of guidelines the SSBA have in place for divisions to follow, but said it's up to school divisions to implement them.

Minister of Education Russ Marchuk said he's confident Saskatchewan schools are safe.

"All 28 school divisions have emergency-preparedness policies in place; they have critical-incidents policies; they have supports available through the school division offices to deal with both staff, community and children's questions regarding critical instances," said Marchuk, noting each division works with local emergency responders to ensure individual needs are met.

"There isn't a school division in our province that doesn't take this matter very seriously," he said.

Dave Jackson, director of risk management and insurance with the SSBA, said Saskatchewan schools are safe: They've been working on a risk- and threat-assessment initiative in divisions across the province with experts from the Canadian Center for Threat Assessment and Trauma Response (CCTATR).

"We're taking a proactive approach and trying to identify those individuals in the communities who have the intent to do what this young fellow did — and stop it," said Jackson.

The SSBA will also be distributing a document from the CCTATR to their divisions that provides educators with tools and methods to help provide a "supportive response" to those who were impacted by the incident.

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It's a 'Merry Christmas' for Saskatoon Transit

Review in the new year. Executive committee decides to forward discussions to cultural diversity and race relations committee

JANE CAULFIELD
jane.caulfield@metronews.ca

After discussions within Saskatoon's executive committee, this holiday season will be a "Merry Christmas" for Saskatoon Transit.

The committee concluded the issue of the "Merry Christmas" message on city buses is something for the cultural diversity and race relations committee to review in the new year. Buses will continue to display the greeting for the remainder of the 2012 holiday season.

"I see no problems with 'Merry Christmas' being there. I see no problem with other religious occasions that are there," said Mayor Don Atchison to the committee. "I think we really are a far more inclusive community."

Ward six councillor Charlie Clark said he would support a discussion from the cultural diversity and race relations committee about how to acknowledge other cultural festivities.

"If somebody is going through a cultural festival and they see a display that is recognizing their festival.... That's a sense of belonging as well," said Clark in Monday's committee meeting.

"Saskatoon has a long tradition of ... melding and bringing together of different traditions, and that's something that we should take pride in and build on, as opposed to sanitize," said Clark.

"Quite frankly, I don't see 'Merry Christmas' leaving our signages at all," said Atchison. "It might include other examples, say, for example, 'Happy Hanukkah' ... but I certainly don't see us leaving Christmas behind."

A local activist officially filed a complaint to city managers on Dec. 13 citing the "Merry Christmas" message on Saskatoon buses is discriminatory.

The cultural diversity and race relations committee is scheduled to meet again Jan. 10, but it is not yet determined if this issue will appear on that meeting's agenda.

67% approval rating

Wall named most popular premier

Brad Wall continues to be the most popular premier across the nation, according to a public opinion poll by Angus Reid.

Wall is the clear winner with the highest 67 per cent approval rating in the poll and is followed by prairie premiers Alison Redford and Greg Selinger at 47 and 46 per cent respectively.

ALYSSA MCDONALD/METRO REGINA

19-year-old victim

Cops investigate Saturday shooting

Police say a Saskatoon man was shot on the street Saturday morning. The 19-year-old victim is recovering after being shot in the shoulder at approximately 4 a.m. near the corner of Avenue I and 19th Street. Anyone with information is asked to contact the Saskatoon Police Service at 975-8300 or Crime Stoppers at 1-800-222-8477. METRO

Police canines, toy dogs bring smile to sick kids on the holidays

As a special treat, Saskatoon police constable Joey Lalonde and his police service dog Diego hung out on Monday with a few kids who are seeking care at Royal University Hospital. Their visit is part of the first-ever provincewide initiative, aiming to have police dogs and puppies from the RCMP breeding program in Regina bring a smile to many sick kids this holiday season. Police are also distributing 120 stuffed toy dogs. JANE CAULFIELD/METRO

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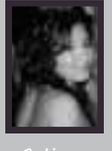
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After eight months, mom has her missing kids back for Christmas

Reunited. Horror began in April when her children were not returned from a trip to her native Zimbabwe

Biatra Muzabazi is able to smile with children Shane, 4, and Rene, 7. RENE JOHNSTON/TORSTAR NEWS SERVICE

A Toronto mom reunited with her two kids after eight months broke down Monday as she thanked those who helped bring the family back together in time for the holidays.

Biatra Muzabazi said she thought she would never get her boy and girl back from Zimbabwe, where they had gone on vacation in April but had not returned.

Police allege family members hid the pair at a Zimbabwean boarding school.

"I never thought (I'd see) my children again," Muzabazi said, clutching her kids and choking back tears.

"You made it possible for me to be with my children for Christmas."

Det.-Const. Shari Nevills, the lead investigator, said it was a steep learning curve dealing with Zimbabwean laws.

"I had several moments when I really didn't think these kids were coming home," Nevills said.

Police decided the best way to effect a possible return was to send Muzabazi to Zimbabwe, even raising the money to help make that happen.

Muzabazi's mother, who lives in the southern African country, helped obtain needed documentation and Zimbabwean authorities accepted the children belonged with their mother in Canada.

However, the paternal family wasn't ready to turn them over.

At one point, as Muzabazi waited outside the boarding school, a family member took the kids and fled.

Running out of money, the distraught mother said she was on the verge of giving up and returning to Canada without her children.

Then, the Canadian embassy in Harare called her last week to say the children had been dropped off there.

"I just started crying. I couldn't believe it," she said.

As the wide-eyed young ones clutched their mother and watched the throng of news people, Muzabazi said her daughter still appears fretful about any separation.

"She just can't go far away from me," Muzabazi said. "She just wants to be with me all the time."

A criminal investigation was ongoing, police said.

THE CANADIAN PRESS

Background

Kids kept a world away

The saga began in April, when Rene, 7, and Shane, 4, went for a visit to Muzabazi's native Zimbabwe, something that had occurred several times before without incident.

This time, however, the divorced mother began to worry when the children, who were born in Mississauga, Ont., were not returned to Canada as scheduled.

Instead, paternal family members placed the kids in a Zimbabwean boarding school, which actively hid them from local authorities, police allege.

In September, the worried mother approached Toronto police, who began investigating. They in turn contacted government officials, the RCMP and Interpol.

THE CANADIAN PRESS

Police bias let Pickton keep killing: Inquiry

Bias against the poor, aboriginal, drug-addicted sex workers in Vancouver's troubled Downtown Eastside led to a series of failures that allowed serial killer Robert Pickton to hunt unimpeded by police for years, a public inquiry has found.

Commissioner Wally Oppal's 1,448-page report, released Monday, chronicles years of mistakes that allowed Pickton to lure dozens of women to his farm in Port Coquitlam, B.C., with little interference from police and even less concern from the public.

"Put yourself in the shoes of one of the missing and murdered women and think how it would feel if you were ... considered unworthy of attention," said Oppal in a news conference.

When relatives and friends attempted to report those women missing, officers and staff with the Vancouver police department told them the women were transient drug addicts who weren't in any trouble or were simply on vacation, Oppal's report notes, referring back to testimony from those families at the inquiry.

RCMP delayed interviewing Robert Pickton, above, because he was "busy" on the farm, a report says. THE CANADIAN PRESS FILE

Still, Oppal concludes the effects of that bias were "unintentional," leading to systemic failures rather than a conscious decision to ignore Vancouver's missing women.

Among other mistakes, Oppal criticized authorities for being reluctant to accept the possibility of a serial killer, handing the investigation to untrained officers, halting work for months at a time and assuming the disappearances stopped before they did.

He made 63 recommendations, including a regional police force for the greater Vancouver region and policy changes to ensure they reflect the needs of impoverished women.

Oppal also called for more services for sex workers and other vulnerable women, including immediate funding for a 24-hour drop-in centre in the Downtown Eastside for sex workers and a transportation service for women and girls who would otherwise resort to hitchhiking along the so-called Highway of Tears in the province's north.

But it's not clear whether Oppal's report will satisfy his many critics, including relatives of missing and murdered women and numerous advocacy groups, who have denounced the inquiry as a flawed process that ignored the voices of the women it was created to protect and put too much emphasis on the police. THE CANADIAN PRESS

This is what a 35-car pileup looks like

A car is caught between two semi trucks Monday in a pileup on a slippery highway near Quebec City that involved more than 35 vehicles. The accident on Highway 40 in Portneuf, Que., involved transport trucks and cars, and multiple collisions that saw some cars hit repeatedly. A number of people sustained minor injuries.

JACQUES BOISSINOT/THE CANADIAN PRESS

Ritalin not for the healthy, journal asserts

An article in the Canadian Medical Association Journal says doctors should consider refusing requests by healthy patients for cognitive-enhancement drugs like those used to treat attention deficit disorder.

Prescription stimulants such as Ritalin and Dexedrine are often used to increase focus, concentration and memory.

Co-author Cynthia Forlini of McGill University in Montreal says there is little evidence that the medications benefit healthy people and their side-effects may cause harm.

She says some studies suggest up to 11 per cent of university students take them.

THE CANADIAN PRESS

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Gun control. Debate simmers as Democrats call for ban on assault rifles

A U.S. senator and lifelong member of the National Rifle Association became the most prominent gun-rights advocate to speak out after last week's school shooting, saying Monday it was time for the debate to move beyond political rhetoric and toward an honest discussion about reasonable restrictions on guns.

As many gun-rights advocates and politicians remained silent, the killing of 20 children as young as six years old led conservative Democratic Sen. Joe Manchin to speak out Monday.

"Never before have we seen our babies slaughtered. It's never happened in America that I can recall, seeing this carnage," Manchin told MSNBC. "Anybody that's a proud gun owner, a proud member of the NRA, they're also proud parents, they're proud grandparents. They understand this has changed where we go from here."

The self-described "proud outdoorsman and hunter" added, "I don't know anyone in the sporting or hunting arena that goes out with an assault rifle, I don't know anybody who needs 30 rounds in a clip to go hunting."

Catalyst

"I think we could be at a tipping point ... where we might actually get something done."
Sen. Chuck Schumer

Democrats say the "meaningful action" Obama has spoken of in the wake of last week's shooting must include a ban on the military-style assault weapons and a look at how the country deals with individuals suffering from serious mental illness.

Gun control was a hot topic in the early 1990s, when Congress enacted a 10-year ban on assault weapons. But since that ban expired in 2004, few Americans have wanted stricter laws, and politicians say they don't want to become targets of a powerful gun rights lobby.

THE ASSOCIATED PRESS

Tasha Devoe, left, of Lawrence, Mass., joins a march to the National Rifle Association headquarters on Capitol Hill in Washington, Monday. Curbing gun violence will be a top priority of President Barack Obama's second term, aides say. MANUEL BALCE CENETA/THE ASSOCIATED PRESS

Students embrace while wearing Newtown school sweaters outside the funeral for six-year-old shooting victim Jack Pinto in Newtown, Conn., on Monday. Friday's shooting has brought the gun control debate in the U.S. to a boiling point. CHARLES KRUPA/THE ASSOCIATED PRESS

Students mourn slain classmates

Connecticut shooting. Gunman's motive still unknown, but investigators believe he attended Sandy Hook

The Connecticut town shattered by last week's school massacre held its first two funerals Monday, as officials weren't sure whether the school itself would ever reopen. Nervous students and teachers across the U.S. returned to classrooms under tighter security.

Family, friends and townspeople streamed out of two funeral homes after saying goodbye to Jack Pinto, who loved the New York Giants football team, and Noah Pozner, who liked to figure out how things worked mechanically. Friends and loved ones headed for two cemeteries afterward.

In front of the funeral home where relatives were mourning Noah, well-wishers placed two teddy bears, a bouquet of white flowers and a single red rose at the base of a maple tree. Hymns rang out from inside the funeral home where Jack's service was being held. "The message was: You're secure now. The worst is over," one mourner, Gwendolyn Glover, said.

The boys were being buried a day after the small community of Newtown came together for a vigil where President Barack Obama said he will use "whatever power" he has to prevent similar massacres.

Coping with fear

"I don't want to see my kids go to schools that become maximum-security fortresses. That's not the world I want to live in, and that's not the world I want to raise them in." Noah Pozner mourner Ray DiStephan

"What choice do we have?" he said. "Are we really prepared to say that we're powerless in the face of such carnage, that the politics are too hard?"

Investigators have offered no motive for the shooting, and the Connecticut community is struggling to comprehend what drove 20-year-old Adam Lanza to shoot to death his mother at home in bed Friday morning, drive her car to the school and unleash gunfire on six adults and 20 children.

Obama has given no specifics on what he might do, and White House spokesman Jay Carney warned that "no single piece of legislation or action will fully address the problem."

THE ASSOCIATED PRESS

Death row

Ottawa requests clemency for U.S. inmate

The Canadian government has sent a letter to Montana's governor requesting that he spare the life of death-row inmate Ronald Smith.

The Dec. 10 letter from Foreign Affairs Minister John Baird to Montana's outgoing Gov. Brian Schweitzer is almost identical to one sent to the Montana Board of Pardons and Parole a year ago prior to the Alberta man's clemency hearing. It makes it clear that the Federal Court ordered the federal government to support Smith's case for clemency.

"The government of Canada requests that you grant clemency to Mr. Smith on humanitarian grounds," writes Baird. "The government ... does not sympathize with violent crime and this letter should not be construed as reflecting a judgment on Mr. Smith's conduct."

Smith has been on death row since admitting he murdered Thomas Running Rabbit and Harvey Madman Jr. near East Glacier, Mont., in 1982.

The Harper government initially refused to back Smith's calls for clemency, saying he was convicted in a democratic country. But the Federal Court ruled Ottawa must follow a long-standing practice of lobbying on behalf of Canadians sentenced to death in other countries.

THE CANADIAN PRESS

Trial delay

Quebec election-night shooter refusing to speak with psychiatrist

The man charged in Quebec's election-night shooting has refused to speak to a French-speaking psychiatrist, causing a delay in his case.

Richard Henry Bain was expected to receive the results of his assessment on Monday to determine whether he was fit to stand trial. But the case was put off until Jan. 11 while the hospital that conducts the evaluation finds a different doctor. Bain will remain at Montreal's Pinel Institute until then. THE CANADIAN PRESS

Governor's summer holiday didn't break conflict rules: BoC

Most boring cottage party ever? Carney vacationed with Liberal finance critic while he was being courted for leadership race

The Bank of Canada says there was no impropriety in governor Mark Carney's accepting an invite to stay at a cottage belonging to Liberal finance critic Scott Brison. THE CANADIAN PRESS FILE

The Bank of Canada tried to quell questions about its governor's impartiality and judgment Monday, saying Mark Carney was not afoul of conflict rules by vacationing in the summer at the cottage of the Liberal finance critic.

The central bank confirmed a weekend report that Carney stayed at Scott Brison's Nova Scotia cottage while key members of the Liberal party were courting him for the leadership.

Spokesman Jeremy Harrison said there was nothing improper in the visit and that bank duties were not discussed.

"The Bank of Canada's general counsel, who is responsible for enforcing the bank's conflict-of-interest policy, has assessed that this visit does not breach the bank's conflict-of-interest guidelines in any way," Harrison said.

"Neither the Bank of Canada nor governor Carney have an actual or potential commercial or business relationship with Mr. Brison."

Harrison added that Carney and Brison had been friends for about a decade and that the visit to the MP's cottage at Cheverie, N.S., cannot "be defined as partisan or political activity."

Brison confirmed the friendship, which began in 2004 when Carney was an associate deputy finance minister and the Nova Scotia MP was the Liberal public works minister, but refused to elaborate about the visit.

THE CANADIAN PRESS

Emergencies

CRTC wants input on 911 service

The CRTC is asking Canadians for ideas on how to improve the 911 emergency service in light of changing technology.

The Canadian Radio-television and Telecommunications Commission said it will review the findings of the public consultation by the end of next May. "Each year, the 911 system is relied upon by thousands of Canadians during emergency situations," commissioner Tim Denton said in a news release.

Denton will conduct research on 911 services in light of the telecommunications system's evolution to next-generation networks based on Internet protocol.

THE CANADIAN PRESS

Discount travel

Air Canada sets launch date for new carrier

Air Canada plans to launch its new low-cost airline Tuesday in Toronto. The company gave few details but promised more information would be released at the event. Air Canada executives will be on hand, and the company will also host a vacation giveaway in downtown Toronto.

The unnamed discount carrier will focus on leisure destinations in the United States, Caribbean and some routes in Europe.

It will begin operations with two Boeing 767-300ER and two Airbus A319 aircraft that will be released from Air Canada's mainline fleet. THE CANADIAN PRESS

Market Minute

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Natural gas: $3.36 US (+4¢)
Dow Jones: 13,235.39 (+100.38)

Cutting workplace 'gender gap' could create economic growth, OECD says

Governments looking to boost growth should focus on further narrowing the "gender gap" that continues to hold women back in education, employment and entrepreneurship, a new report said Monday.

Women continue to earn less than men, are less likely to make it to the top of the career ladder and are more likely to spend their final years in poverty, according to Closing the Gender Gap, released by the Organization for Economic Cooperation and Development.

Trimming or eliminating this discrimination could provide a significant source of growth for ailing economies, the OECD says. On average, a 50 per cent decrease in the gender gap in labour force participation would lead to a 0.3-percentage-point increase in annual GDP per-capita growth rate in OECD countries.

"Investment in gender equality yields the highest returns of all development investments," the OECD said.

THE ASSOCIATED PRESS

Solutions

- A key part of the solution is promoting access to affordable childcare, the OECD report says. "If childcare eats up one wage so that there is little or no financial gain in going out to work, parents (most often mothers) are less likely to seek a job."
- While women have largely caught up or surpassed men in education, girls remain less likely to choose scientific and technological fields of study, the OECD said, pointing to a need to change gender stereotypes and attitudes early on.
- Women earn on average 16 per cent less than men in OECD countries, and the disparity widens the higher up the corporate ladder women climb: among top-earners, women are paid 21 per cent less than male counterparts.

Research In Motion

Rogers begins orders for BB10 'all-touch' devices

Rogers Communications says that its current wireless customers are now able to place orders for BlackBerry 10 smartphones.

The new BlackBerry 10 devices on offer will be "all-touch" and won't have the physical keyboard that BlackBerry users are used to typing on. But Rogers won't be providing details on pricing, availability or specifications until early in the new year.

Research in Motion has previously said an "all-touch" version of its new phones would be released first, followed by a model with a physical keyboard shortly afterward.

RIM announced separately that it's giving an invitation-only preview of the BlackBerry 10 to more than 120 select government and private-sector customers in a variety of industries.

The two announcements are part of efforts to build interest in a new generation of BlackBerrys in hopes of reviving the Canadian technology company.

The BlackBerry 10 smartphones are seen as make-or-break products for Research in Motion, which has faced intense competition from Apple's iPhones and smartphones using the Google Android operating system. THE CANADIAN PRESS

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IT'S ACTUALLY NOT THE END OF THE WORLD

SHE SAYS...
Jessica Napier
metronews.ca

Do you have all of your affairs in order? Have you told all your friends and family just how much you love them? Because if the fear mongers are to be believed, we only have a few days left to say our goodbyes before an apocalyptic end-of-days descends upon us all on Dec. 21.

A fate foretold by hieroglyphs and perpetuated by a terrible John Cusack disaster movie, the Mayan doomsday prophecy represents the end of the Mesoamerican long-count calendar. This so-called Day of Reckoning will bring about something (although no one is quite sure what exactly) that will mean the end the world as we know it.

Prepping for reality

And yet, despite all the evidence to the contrary (you know, science), people around the world are very into this faux-pocalypse.

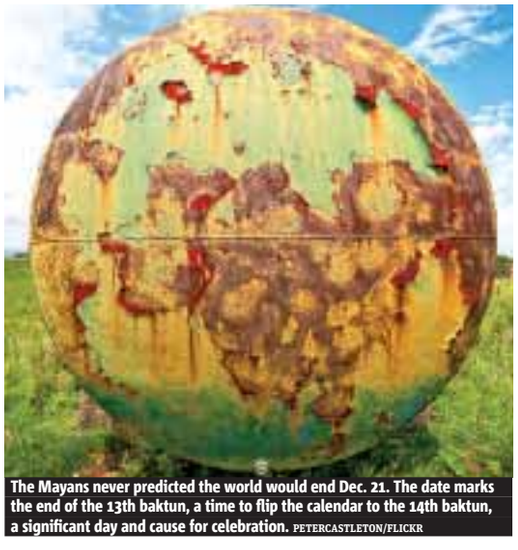
But before you get too nervous about solar flares, catastrophic floods and swarms of killer bees, just stop. NASA went and debunked the whole thing by releasing a video entitled Why the World Didn't End Yesterday, a whole 10 days ahead of schedule. Their official statement is something along the lines of "Our planet has been getting along just fine for more than four billion years, so everybody just relax, OK?"

And yet, despite all the evidence to the contrary (you know, science), people around the world are very into this faux-pocalypse. Alarmist bloggers are convincing people to hunker down with canned goods while New Age visionaries are purchasing one-way plane tickets to a remote village in Turkey renowned for its protective energies. And then there's that Chinese farmer who is spending hundreds of thousands of dollars building an ark as a precautionary measure — AN ARK!

I'm tempted to join in on the fun: host a doomsday pity party for myself and listen to Britney Spears' Till the World Ends on repeat while drowning my sorrows in a pint of Häagen-Dazs Mayan Chocolate ice cream. But, rationally, we all know that we've got nothing to worry about; we're still buying Christmas presents and making plans for New Year's Eve. I'm actually inclined to think that the whole thing might just be a way for companies to cash in on tasteless apocalypse-blowout sales and end-of-the-world-themed merchandise.

So, even though I love a good conspiracy theory, I think I'll side with our modern-day scientists over an ancient civilization and its 5,125-year-old calendar. However, if your Judgment Day predictions involve a sexy astronaut version of Ben Affleck saving us all from a rogue asteroid, you definitely have my attention.

Follow Jessica Napier on Twitter @MetroSheSays



The Mayans never predicted the world would end Dec. 21. The date marks the end of the 13th baktun, a time to flip the calendar to the 14th baktun, a significant day and cause for celebration. PETERCASTLETON/FLICKR

Do you do takeout?

SOLENT

Culinary world record

World's largest pizza is served

Five Italian chefs have set a new record for the world's largest pizza, which measured staggering 40 metres in diameter — the length of nearly three buses.

Such was the size of the massive margherita that the chefs in Rome had to bake the dough in 5,234 separate batches over a 48-hour period.

The gargantuan food item was made gluten-free in order to raise awareness about celiac disease, the most frequent food intolerance worldwide.

METRO

What's in a name

"We named the pizza Ottavia (after Roman Emperor Octavian Augustus Caesar) to symbolize the hope of a great economic and cultural revival."

Dovilio Nardi, head of the Italian chef quintet

Too cheesy?

- 8,981 kilograms of gluten-free flour, mixed with 11,274 litres of water
- 4,535 kilograms of tomato sauce
- 675 kilograms of margarine
- 250 kilograms of salt: over 40,000 times an adult's recommended daily allowance
- 3,991 kilograms of cheese
- 100 kilograms of lettuce
- 25 kilograms of balsamic vinegar
- 1,354 litres of yeast

Extra, extra large

23,224

kilograms was the total weight of this prodigious pizza. The colossal size is the same as more than 68,300 regular frozen pizzas put together.
The team broke the previous record, set in 1990 by Norwood Pick 'n Pay hypermarket in South Africa. The former record holder's pizza was made of gluten and measured 37 metres.

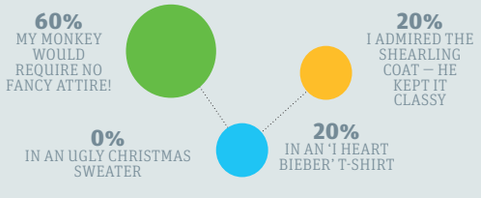
Online

For more of Metro's voices, visit metronews.ca.

Metropolitan Panel

Register at metropolitanpanel.ca and take the quick poll

If you had been the owner of the Ikea monkey, how would you have dressed it for its international debut?


60%
MY MONKEY WOULD REQUIRE NO FANCY ATTIRE!
20%
I ADMIRED THE SHEARLING COAT — HE KEPT IT CLASSY
0%
IN AN UGLY CHRISTMAS SWEATER
20%
IN AN 'I HEART BIEBER' T-SHIRT

Twitter

@iChirs: Do you favourite tweets? If so, on what basis?

@SaskGregger: Must stop eating so much crap. Pretty soon I'll be able to borrow Santa's pants

@raygfox: Trying to watch LOTR and twitter not mixing well

@vivemusic: hello again, real world. you remind me of robots.

@4mapleleaves: Slighly disappointed with Cora's in #yxe. Long line up to get in, long line up to pay, cold food. Good value for the $, great servers.

@brandonsnowsell: If you leave no parking on my street, I have no reason to drive down it, so why bother clearing the ruts? #yxecc

metro
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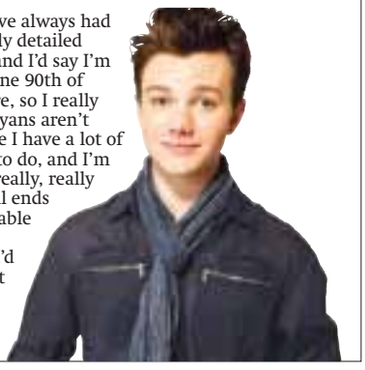
With Dec. 21 fast approaching, we ask a few celebs what they might do if they were faced with the end of the world

NED EHRBAR
Metro World News in Hollywood

CELEBRITY BUCKET LISTS

Chris Colfer (Glee)



You know, I've always had a really, really detailed bucket list, and I'd say I'm only about one 90th of the way there, so I really hope the Mayans aren't right because I have a lot of stuff I want to do, and I'm going to be really, really pissed if it all ends and I'm not able to. If I had a month left, I'd probably just go on a very expensive vacation.

Joel McHale (Community)

An end of the world bucket list? Yes. A really sturdy bucket.

Teresa Palmer (Warm Bodies)

Oh gosh, end of the world bucket list? Yeah, I would've liked to have had a baby before the end of the world, but there's not really time for that. I'm not sure what I'm going to do. I want to jump out of a plane, for sure. I would just eat so much food, 24/7 just eat and eat and eat. Travel around the world, eating from all different cultures. That'd be amazing.

Maggie Grace (Taken 2)

Honestly, one of my sort of bucket list items I just ticked off. I did a Broadway play for the first time. It was terrifying. But it's something I've wanted to do since I was 11 years old. So I at least checked one off.

Jake Abel (The Host)

If I knew the world was going to end, I would skydive, which is something that normal people do, but it would take the end of the earth for me. But without a parachute. I would just jump out of an airplane.

Kellan Lutz (The Twilight Saga)

No, I don't (have one), because I don't believe the world's going to come to an end. God never gave a date so I don't believe it's going to happen. So there's no need for me to make a plan B with all that. I'm just living my life every day to the fullest.

Week of Armageddon

Check out Metro all week for more stories of apocalyptic proportions.

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Jason Trawick and Britney Spears

Oops! I did it again? Break up talk circulates for Britney and beau

Britney Spears' relationship with Jason Trawick may be about to end, though the X Factor host and pop star is apparently the last to know, according to Hollyscoop.

"Jason has told Britney's entire family that he's planning to leave her so Britney will have a support system when he breaks the bad news," a source says of the couple, who are reportedly spending the holidays apart. Trawick is said to be waiting until Spears' work on the current season of the X Factor is wrapped before dumping her.

METRO DISH

OUR TAKE ON THE WORLD OF CELEBRITIES

The Word

Blue Ivy Carter HELLOBLUEIVYCARTER.TUMBLR.COM

The big ol' babies of 2012

THE WORD
Dorothy Robinson
scene@metronews.ca

The past few days have been rough for everyone, so I'm going to dedicate today's column to some of the biggest celebrity babies who made their appearance this year. That's right: lots and lots of adorable babies!

Who: Blue Ivy Carter
Parents: Jay-Z and Beyoncé
Given the media attention surrounding the birth of Blue Ivy, it's pretty surprising the world didn't tip off its axis when she came into the world on Jan. 7.

Who: Samuel Affleck
Parents: Jennifer Garner and Ben Affleck
The movie-star duo welcomed their first son on Feb. 27. Not much is known about baby Sam, other than he'll probably be ridiculously good looking and talented.

Who: Maxwell Johnson
Parents: Jessica Simpson and Eric Johnson
After following the longest pregnancy known to man, Simpson finally birthed baby Maxi on May 1. And now she's allegedly pregnant again. That, or maybe she's just constantly gestating.

Who: Jack Pratt
Parents: Anna Farris and Chris Pratt
Not a lot of fanfare was made about baby Jack's somewhat premature appearance on Aug. 25. Instead of gracing any magazine covers to showboat the news, new dad Chris Pratt Tweeted this message to his followers, "It's a boy! Thanks for all your kind words. In lieu of gifts we ask that you mouth kiss a stranger."

Who: Edward Duke Rancic
Parents: Bill and Giuliana Rancic
After years of unsuccessful IVF treatments and a miscarriage and then a breast cancer diagnosis, the Rancic family finally had a bit of good news: Their baby Edward Duke was born via a gestational carrier on Aug. 29.

Who: Tennessee Toth
Parents: Reese Witherspoon and Jim Toth
The baby, whose name still sounds like a brand of whiskey to me, was born on Sept. 27.

Matt Damon ALL PHOTOS GETTY IMAGES

Matt Damon sets it straight

Matt Damon has been dodging gay rumours ever since he and best friend Ben Affleck burst on the scene with Good Will Hunting, but he's avoided acknowledging them — until now. "I never denied those rumours because I was offended and didn't want to offend my friends who were gay — as if being gay were some kind of f–ing disease," he tells Playboy magazine. "It put me in a weird position in that sense. The whole thing was just gross."

Morgan Freeman

Newtown tragedy: Freeman didn't comment

Not so fast, Facebook users. A lengthy quote attributed to Morgan Freeman in the wake of the Newtown, Conn., elementary school shooting tragedy has been making the rounds on the social networking site, suggesting media coverage encouraged the shooter. The only problem is those aren't Freeman's words. "Morgan neither made statements or posted those statements. We are trying to find out who did, but they did not originate from him," a source for the actor tells E! News.

Twitter

@HackedOffHugh
Taking gooner nephew to Emirates. Thanks to all Walcotts. Will try not to start ruck.

@ZacharyQuinto
lately been feeling like the disgruntled child of divorced parents twitter and instagram. pull it together you guys. this is embarrassing.

@EmmaBunton
So many people running on the streets of London, that's it im gonna get fit,,,,,,,, after Christmas!!!

@Joan_Rivers
I love celebrity Christmas carols. in Jessica Simpson's house they'll stand around the piano singing, "I Saw Daddy Kissing Santa Claus."

Last minute holiday health

Fitness. Celebrity trainer Ashley Borden has a Christmas gift for you: expert tips to avoid temptation

ROMINA McGUINNESS
life@metronews.ca

What was the point of kicking yourself into shape last January if you're going to let all your efforts go to waste in the last two weeks of the year?

"You should absolutely indulge during the holidays because if you restrict yourself, you'll only feel deprived and frustrated," Ashley Borden, who trains celebrities including Ryan Gosling, Christina Aguilera and Ke$ha, tells Metro. "The problem is that people tend to adopt an 'all or nothing' attitude and as a result, their fitness and diet completely goes out of the window."

Here's what she'd do in certain situations.

Scenario 1: There is no way I can ditch my family so I can go off and do some exercise.

"I don't believe that because you're with your family, you can't take the time out to workout," says Borden.

"Why would you turn off your life and drop the things that are actually helping you feel good? Many people find dealing with the full family dynamic both stressful and emotional — making it even more important that you set aside an hour or so each day of 'me' time where you can let off some steam.

"It may seem a little selfish, but don't care."

TIP: Focusing on yourself will make you a more productive family member because you'll feel less resentful for being locked in the house stuffing the turkey and chopping up carrots.

Scenario 2: The holidays are about switching off. I don't want to stick to a schedule.

"Normally, people find it easy to stay on track because they follow a set routine. They get up, cycle to work, have breakfast and so on," says Borden. "But during the holidays, because there isn't the same schedule and structure, diet and fitness habits can become very erratic. The assumption is that once it's all over, losing the extra weight and bloat will be easy when deep down we all know we're going to struggle. The key is to not schedule in exercise. Make loose but firm plans — book a spinning class or stock up on fruit and vegetables so you have something to snack on."

TIP: Wake up without an alarm. Have some breakfast before you do a quick 30 minute cardio workout. Once you've done that, you can relax for the rest of the day.

Scenario 3: Festive food is my favourite. I'm going to starve myself all day just so I can stuff my face at dinnertime.

Don't get sucked into the Santarexic habits this month. THINKSTOCK

"Never assume that it's OK to skip meals during the day in order to lash out at Christmas dinner. This kind of behaviour will really screw up your eating patterns," warns Borden.

"Your body can't assimilate and metabolize all these calories at once and that's how you end up gaining weight. It's much easier to eat a normal dinner and allow yourself a bit of indulgence. One slice of cake won't make or break your body."

TIP: On days when you know you're likely to over-eat, try and break a sweat for at least 20 minutes.

Scenario 4: It's impossible to workout in my hotel.

"If you're really stuck at your in-laws in the middle of nowhere, you always have your body weight to use.

Set up a mini circuit in your room — even if you have very little space, you can train for around 30 minutes by doing reverse lunges, planks or pushups.

If you want to do some cardio, pack a jump rope."

TIP: Invest in some resistance bands with handles. And, again, pack a jump rope in your luggage.

Tips to a stress-free holiday

December should be a month of indulgence and happiness — then why is it always a time of conflict and drama? Laura Oates, behavioural psychologist at Harley Therapy in England, tells us how to avoid a mental breakdown.

Sorry, Christmas is not a Kodak moment

"We're expected to believe that as if by magic, we're all going to get on famously. We all wish we had a loving family that peacefully opened their presents on Christmas day, but in reality, you all wake up late, moody and hung over. Make the best of what you've got and you won't feel so cheated. If things go horribly wrong — well it only lasts a few days."

Have an attitude of gratitude

"The holidays can be a time of forced bonding and jollity, but rather than dwell on all the bad stuff, think about what you're thankful for. Yes, you might feel like punching Auntie Phyllis by the time she's had her third whisky, but if you remind (yourself) that you only have to spend one day a year with her — you'll have more patience."

Pretend you're still at work

"What makes you more effective at work can help you save time and beat stress at home. Time management skills: Salami slicing is time consuming, so do that first. Think of present buying as you would a big project — you'd never leave it to the very last minute. And if your sister is spoiled and a bully, deal with her assertively."

Don't trash your body

"Put too many demands on your body and what will happen is that you will end up running on adrenalin, which can cause up to 60 per cent of your cognitive powers to be taken away from you. You can lose sleep and concentration — now try planning something. Look after your body and it will look after your mind. Don't expect it to take you to loads and loads of parties."

Velvety chocolate flavour shines in rich cheesecake

ROSE REISMAN
for more, visit
rosereisman.com

This recipe serves 12. MARK SHAPIRO, FROM ROSE REISMAN'S COMPLETE LIGHT KITCHEN (WHITECAP BOOKS)

You'll never eat a cheesecake that's so dense and rich tasting, yet so low in fat and calories. The combo of semi-sweet chocolate and cocoa powder gives this cheesecake its velvety chocolate flavour. Garnish it with fresh berries.

It comes in at 259 calories and just 10 grams of fat per serving.

1. Preheat oven to 350 F. Spray 9-inch springform pan with cooking oil.

2. Crust: Combine wafer crumbs, 2 tbsp water and oil in bowl and mix well. Pat onto bottom and slightly up sides of springform pan.

3. Filling: Combine chocolate chips and 2 tbsp water in microwaveable bowl and microwave for 40 seconds. Stir until smooth.

4. Combine chocolate mix with ricotta and cream cheese, 1 cup sugar, cocoa, egg and 1/2 cup sour cream in bowl of food processor and purée until smooth. Pour over crust. Bake 30 minutes. Centre should still be slightly loose.

5. For topping, mix sour cream and sugar. Carefully spoon over cake. Bake another 10 minutes. Cool on rack, then chill completely before removing the sides of the pan and serving. Top with chocolate wafer crumbs. ROSE REISMAN'S COMPLETE LIGHT KITCHEN (WHITECAP BOOKS)

Ingredients

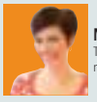
Crust
- 2 cups chocolate wafer crumbs
- 2 tbsp water
- 1 tbsp vegetable oil

Cheesecake
- 1/3 cup semi-sweet chocolate chips
- 2 tbsp water
- 1 1/2 cups light smooth ricotta cheese
- 3/4 cup light cream cheese
- 1 cup granulated sugar
- 1/4 cup unsweetened cocoa powder
- 1 large egg
- 1/2 cup low-fat sour cream
- 2 tbsp all-purpose flour

Topping
- 1 1/4 cups low-fat sour cream
- 2 tbsp sugar

Health Solutions

Your holiday cheat sheet



NUTRI-BITES
Theresa Albert, DHN, RNCP
myfriendinfood.com

Oh, come on, it's the holidays! We both know you are going to eat more than you should, so let's just embrace it. I encourage my private clients to switch to a "nutrient per calorie" model when they are going to cheat. That means that if you can't keep calories low, focus on those items that are loaded with nutrients and use them to enhance your "cheats." Here are three ideas:

1. Cranberry sauce

Assuming it is homemade and not from a can (which likely means more sugar), this condiment is a great way to stretch that brownie/Nanaimo bar/cake you have on your plate. A couple of tablespoons on the side will give you a filling, tart kick of phytonutrients and fibre. The hope is that you can now resist that second slice...

2. Spice it up

Your brain registers intense flavours more actively than bland ones. This means that adding spiciness or low calorie intensity may help you feel satisfied with less food. Think hot sauce, spicy mustard or even horseradish — all will perk up your palate!

3. Fresh herbs

Oh, I know they are often only on the platter for garnish but who says you can't hog garnish? Fresh herbs are full of chlorophyll and tummy soothing nutrients that may replace the extra space on your plate that you are tempted to fill with mashed potatoes.

THERESA ALBERT IS AN AUTHOR AND ON CALL, PRIVATE NUTRITIONIST IN TORONTO. SHE IS @THERESAALBERT ON TWITTER AND FOUND DAILY AT MYFRIENDINFOOD.COM

Easy treat. Chocolate Espresso Bread Pudding

1. Butter a 13 x 9-inch (3 l) glass baking dish and set aside.

2. In saucepan, combine chocolate, 2 cups (500 ml) of cream, sugar, espresso and butter and melt over medium-low heat, stirring, until everything is smooth. Remove from heat.

3. Meanwhile, place slices of bread on cutting board and cut off crusts. Cut each slice diagonally into 4 triangles. Set aside.

4. In bowl, whisk eggs until blended. Gradually pour in chocolate mix in a thin stream, whisking to combine. Spoon a 1/2 inch (1 cm) layer of chocolate mix over bottom of prepared dish. Place half bread triangles over chocolate, overlapping slightly. Pour half of remaining chocolate mix over bread; cover with remaining bread in same pattern as before. Pour remaining chocolate mix over top. Press bread down with fork to allow mix to coat bread. Allow dish to cool 10 mins. then cover with plastic wrap and refrigerate 24 hours.

5. To serve, preheat oven to 350 F (180 C). Remove plastic wrap from dish and bake 45 mins. or until top is crunchy and pudding is set but pudding-like in the centre. Let cool for at least 10 minutes.

6. In a chilled bowl, whip remaining cream and serve with warm pudding. DAIRYGOODNESS.CA

Ingredients

- 6 oz (170 g) dark chocolate (70% cocoa solids), chopped
- 3 cups (750 ml) 35% whipping cream, divided
- 3/4 cup (175 ml) sugar
- 1/2 cup (125 ml) freshly brewed espresso
- 1/2 cup (125 ml) butter, cut into cubes
- 12 slices (1/2-inch/1 cm thick) day-old egg bread
- 4 eggs

The goodness of eggnog in a tart? It doesn't get any better

Crust

1. In a food processor, pulse together flour, icing sugar and salt. Pulse in butter until the mixture has the texture of fine crumbs.

Ingredients

Crust
- 1 1/2 cups (375 ml) all-purpose flour
- 3 tbsp (45 ml) icing sugar
- 1/2 tsp (2 ml) salt
- 1/2 cup (125 ml) unsalted cold butter, cubed
- 1 egg yolk
- 2 tbsp (25 ml) whipping cream

Eggnog Filling
- 1 pkg (250g/8 oz) plain cream cheese, softened
- 1/2 cup (125 ml) whipping cream
- 1/2 cup (125 ml) granulated sugar
- 3 eggs
- 2 egg yolks
- 1 tsp (5 ml) pure vanilla extract
- 1/2 tsp (2 ml) ground nutmeg
- Pinch salt
- 2 tbsp (25 ml) bourbon (optional)
- 1 tsp (5 ml) ground cinnamon (optional)

This recipe makes one 10-inch (25 cm) tart, 8 servings EGG FARMERS OF ONTARIO

2. Whisk egg yolk with whipping cream; drizzle over flour mixture. Pulse dough to combine. Loosely divide dough into quarters, clump together and pat each quarter into tart pan. Press pastry evenly over bottom and up sides of a 10-inch (25 cm) tart pan with removable bottom. Refrigerate for at least 30 minutes or up to 1 day.

3. Cover dough with foil; fill with dried beans or rice to weigh down the crust. Bake in bottom third of oven at 375 F (190 C) until edges are a light golden colour, about 20 minutes. Remove weights and foil and let cool on rack for 15 minutes.

Eggnog filling

1. In a food processor, blend cream cheese, whipping cream, and sugar until creamy, about 1 minute.

2. Add whole eggs, egg yolks, vanilla, nutmeg, salt, bourbon and cinnamon (if desired), and blend until smooth. Gently pour mixture into tart shell.

3. Bake in 350 F (180 C) oven until filling is set, but still jiggling slightly in the centre, about 20 minutes (the filling will continue to set as it cools). Cool tart completely in pan on a rack.

4. Just before serving, remove side of pan. Cut into eight wedges and serve with whipped cream. Whip 2 cups (500 ml) whipping cream and fold in 1 tsp (5 ml) of nutmeg, if desired. EGG FARMERS OF ONTARIO

Games to raise your money IQ

Alison on Money. Website's game, called Cranial Cash Clash, helps teach you money skills

YOUR MONEY
Alison Griffiths
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It's not too late to raise your holiday money IQ! If you're feeling a little overwhelmed as the big day draws near, there's nothing like a game to improve your outlook.

The Investor Education Fund (getsmarteraboutmoney.ca) has created Cranial Cash Clash, a series of interactive games to teach money skills. The latest, Gift Thrift, offers tips about holiday spending, the use of credit cards and related topics such as credit ratings. You may find that a couple of the questions have fairly obvious answers, but they do get you thinking.

On the other hand, there are many you likely don't know.

Try this one: If you decide to give a gift to your favourite charity or charities, does the amount you give affect the tax credit you receive?

Which is right?

A. No. As long as they are accredited charities, the benefit to you is the same.

B. Yes, but there may be restrictions for out-of-province charities.

C. Yes, the tax credit goes up if you give more than $200.

D. No, it's a 15 per cent credit no matter how much you give.

The answer is C.

Gift Thrift can be played via Facebook with friends or family members. The Leaderboard lets you log in and keep track of scores as you go. There are eight other Cranial Cash Clash games dealing with everything from investing to financial scams and debt. The questions are randomized so you can't practice the answers for a certain win.

Bonus points are awarded when you answer within a certain time. If you flub, as I did on a question about credit scores (my finger slipped, really!), you can input your email address at the end of the game to receive information about that subject area. You'll also see a link to a more detailed explanation.

Though not designed for youth, the series is also a great way to get teens and young adults thinking and talking about money issues. They won't be familiar with many of the topics, but the questions will stimulate discussion.

Cranial Cash Clash is a nice break from holiday shopping.

Contact Alison at griffiths.alison@gmail.com or alisongriffiths.ca

Pop quiz

What is the interest free grace period on credit cards?

- **A.** There isn't one
- **B.** 30 days
- **C.** 14 days
- **D.** 21 days

• Answer (D)

Christmas presents

Gift buying for awkward people

FUN AND FRUGAL
Lesley Scorgie
money@metronews.ca

It can be tough to find an appropriate gift for every person in your life. ISTOCK IMAGES

So your dad has a new girlfriend and you're still warming up to her. Sure, she seems nice enough, but without knowing much about her personal tastes, what should you buy her for the holidays when your budget is already tight?

We've all been faced with the "what to buy for the awkward person in your life" dilemma. You don't want to waste your money or offend your boss, co-worker, a not-too-close friend, or someone your friend or family member is dating. You may even want to impress the person with something useful or miraculously thoughtful.

Before you hit up the mall for the latest infomercial gadget, understand the relationship of the person to you and what they mean to you today and in the future. If you and your brother-in-law are off to a rocky start, you may want to extend a thoughtful olive branch that could help mend a bridge or two. If it's your boss, watch what you spend so that you don't come off looking like a suck-up, especially if your coworkers find out.

Determine the appropriate price point for the person. Have an open discussion with friends and family members in advance and set limits. This might be an opportune time to introduce the idea of a frugal Secret Santa gift exchange where you're only responsible for buying one gift for one person.

Be resourceful. Investigate what the person would want or need. Listen carefully when in conversation to see if they give away any hints. Ask someone who knows them well what they'd enjoy. Are they a coffee connoisseur or movie buff? If so, perhaps a travel mug, which reduces waste and saves a few pennies at the till, or a gift card to the movies, would be appropriate.

Cash in your loyalty rewards toward the gift so you don't have to dig deeper into your wallet. Better yet, forget buying a gift and make a donation on behalf of your coworkers to a well-known charity.

Overall, stop while you're ahead. You don't need to buy gifts for everyone in your life. This results in overspending or spreading out your budget so thin that you'll end up buying junk for people rather than something useful or thoughtful. If you've got loads of people you'd like to please with presents, try baking or making something small and thoughtful.

A frugal gift of appreciation for that awkward person might go a long way toward making the relationship more pleasant.

But if you really don't like the person, forget a gift and simply save your money.

Follow Lesley on Twitter @LesleyScorgie

Talk with kids about shooting, make them feel safe: Experts

Family. Following the Connecticut shooting, it's best to limit kids' exposure to media

The killings at a Connecticut elementary school left parents struggling to figure out what, if anything, to tell their children.

President Barack Obama said he and his wife, Michelle, would tell their daughters that they love them and hug them a little tighter. Experts say that's a good example to follow. Parents also should allow children to talk about their feelings in the coming days while sheltering them from the 24/7 media coverage of the event, they say.

A man gunned down more than two dozen people Friday, most of them kids at a Newtown, Conn., elementary school. The shooter was among the 28 people left dead, apparently from a self-inflicted wound.

Whitney Finucane wasn't sure how and when she would talk with her son, Nico, about the shooting. She kissed and hugged him when he came out from kindergarten at Dr. Martin Luther King Elementary in Providence, R.I., on Friday.

"I don't know how to explain insanity and evil to a five-year-old," she said. "I don't know that he can really grasp it."

Even the youngest schoolchildren are likely to hear about it, said Glenn Saxe, chairman of the department of child and adolescent psychiatry at NYU Langone Medical Center.

"It's really important, especially at this time, for parents to check in with their kids, to be attuned to how they're feeling, how they're doing and to answer questions honestly and straightforwardly," he said. "For any other kid in school, this has meaning. Parents need to understand that even in surprising ways, this can affect their kids."

Parents can start by asking their children what they've already heard and what questions they have, said Dr. David Schonfeld, a pediatrician and director of the National Center for School Crisis and Bereavement at Cincinnati Children's Hospital Medical Center. If they ask why someone would do something like this, it's OK to say you don't know.

"I wouldn't provide false reassurance or dismiss legitimate concerns," he said. "We don't help children by telling them they shouldn't be afraid of things that are frightening."

Parents can tell their kids, "What is most important is that you're safe and you're going to be safe," said Dr. Louis Kraus, chief of child and adolescent psychiatry at Rush University Medical Center in Chicago.

Above all, parents need to try to help their children feel safe, he said. Helping kids return to or maintain normal routines can help minimize their anxiety, Kraus said.

Some children may ask the same questions over and over as a way to seek reassurance, and parents shouldn't dismiss them, said Dr. David Fassler, a child and adolescent psychiatrist in Burlington, Vt.

"Acknowledge and validate the child's thoughts, feelings, and reactions. Let them know that you think their questions and concerns are important and appropriate," he said.

Parents of young children should keep their children from hearing reports on TV, radio and social media and to closely monitor exposure to media for all children, several experts said. Children who show persistent signs of anxiety and stress, including recurring nightmares or sleep problems and fears about leaving home, should see their pediatrician or a mental health expert, Kraus said.

THE ASSOCIATED PRESS

Safety at school

As students head back to their classrooms on Monday, parents and children should know that school shootings are rare and schools still are among the safest places, said William Lassiter of the Center for the Prevention of School Violence. Parents can ask their principal or parent-teacher group for a copy of their school crisis plan.

Notice whether schools stick to their own security plans, he said. Do people have to check in at the door and sign in at the front office, for example?

"A lot of times, the parents are the ones who need to remind the school," he said.

It's important to know what to tell your children after a tragedy. ISTOCK IMAGES

MLB

Jays make Dickey signing official

The Toronto Blue Jays have officially acquired Cy Young winner R.A. Dickey on Monday, adding the 38-year-old knuckleballer to an improved starting rotation.

The New York Mets traded Dickey to Toronto for a package featuring prized young catcher Travis d'Arnaud.

THE CANADIAN PRESS

R.A. Dickey GETTY IMAGES FILE

Soccer

Fans of Russian team call for all-white, non-gay team

Fans of two-time defending Russian champion Zenit St. Petersburg are calling for non-white and gay players to be excluded from the team.

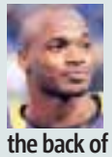
Supporters' club Landscrona released a manifesto Monday demanding Zenit to field an all-white, heterosexual team. It added "dark-skinned players are all but forced down Zenit's throat" and said gay players were "unworthy of our great city."

Coach Luciano Spalletti said on Zenit's website that "tolerance for me is most of all the ability to understand and accept differences."

"Furthermore, being tolerant means that you fight against any kind of stupidity," he added.

THE ASSOCIATED PRESS

NFL



"It's something that I'm not focusing on, it's in the back of my mind, but I want to accomplish that."

Minnesota Vikings running back Adrian Peterson, who is 294 yards away from eclipsing Eric Dickerson's record of 2,105 yards rushing set in 1984 with two games remaining in the season.

Stamkos staying active while away from NHL ice

Lockout. Top sniper trying to 'pick up positives' while awaiting end to labour unrest

The longest hiatus Steven Stamkos has ever taken from high-level hockey is not without its occasional good moments.

There are always plenty of laughs when the NHL star takes the ice for a weekly pickup game with his father Chris and some buddies, a handful of whom are almost three times his age. There is the extra time spent in the gym alongside close friend and mentor Gary Roberts.

And then there is the anticipation of next week's Christmas celebration, the first one he'll get to enjoy at home with family in Markham, Ont., in six or seven years.

"As tough as it is, as frustrating as it is, you try to pick up some positives," said Stamkos.

Quoted

"We feel bad for (the fans), but we're obviously trying to get something done."

Steven Stamkos

But it's clear the NHL's most dangerous scorer is feeling the pain of the lockout. Standing under the sloped roof at the building formerly known as Maple Leaf Gardens on Monday, the locked-out Tampa Bay Lightning forward couldn't help but slip in a few references to his growing displeasure.

"It's frustrating," said Stamkos. "You do something for your whole life and you don't really think anything of it. Everything you do is geared towards playing hockey. Now when you don't have that, it's tough."

The 22-year-old quickly steered the conversation back to a charity game in Toronto on Wednesday night, where he'll captain a team against one led by Montreal Canadiens defenceman P.K. Subban.

He'll get to skate alongside James Neal, Dion Phaneuf, Phil Kessel and Logan Couture, among others, with all of the proceeds from the sold-out Mattamy Athletic Centre benefiting the NHLPA's Goals & Dreams Fund and the RBC Play Hockey program.

"When there's no hockey, you try to find other things to do and a great cause to be part of," said Stamkos. "This is one of them."

THE CANADIAN PRESS

Tampa Bay Lightning sniper Steven Stamkos is keeping busy during the NHL lockout by playing pickup hockey, working out and getting involved in charity games. BRUCE BENNETT/GETTY IMAGES FILE

State of the lockout

- **Games cancelled.** Players have missed six pay cheques with 526 games cancelled through Dec. 30.
- **State of talks.** Neither side is meeting. The NHL and NHLPA met with federal mediators in New York Dec. 12-13, but then talks ended.
- **Happening now.** All 750 players are deciding whether to give their 30-member executive board the mandate to file what is known as a "disclaimer of interest." A two-thirds majority is needed to take the next step — dissolving their union. The five-day informal electronic vote is being conducted until Thursday.
- **Will it pass?** Think "solidarity" here. There's no way players won't get behind this move. Not giving their board this power basically ends the game with Gary Bettman smiling like the Cheshire Cat from Alice in Wonderland.

TORSTAR NEWS SERVICE

Austin gets another CFL chance with Ticats

Kent Austin was named the Tiger-Cats' head coach, general manager and vice-president of football operations in Hamilton on Monday.

FRANK GUNN/THE CANADIAN PRESS

When Kent Austin turned the Hamilton Tiger-Cats down in 2011, he had no idea he'd be running the team a year later.

The Ticats and the Saskatchewan Roughriders both pursued Austin to fill their head-coaching vacancies in 2011, but he opted to stay in his job as head coach at Cornell University.

This time, the Ticats sweetened the pot.

On Monday, the club hired Austin as their head coach, general manager and vice-president of football operations.

"Last year, the timing wasn't right," Austin said during a news conference in Hamilton.

"But things change and for me this opportunity continued to grow, and continued to grow in our thoughts. I just thought it was the best time and my family really wanted to come."

In his new roles, Austin is in charge of all football-related decisions, something he says was more attractive to him. Still, he was surprised the Ticats gave him a second chance.

"Sometimes opportunities come around once in this profession and if you pass them up you don't see them again," he said. "But for whatever reason it did and came at a time that was right for us."

THE CANADIAN PRESS

New decision-maker

Kent Austin takes over as coach from George Cortez, who was fired last week after compiling a 6-12 record.

- Bob O'Billovich is out as GM and is mulling over an offer to remain with the franchise as a consultant.

Horoscopes

♈ Aries
March 21 - April 20
It may be hard to tell fact from fiction today, so don't jump to conclusions. What others say and what others mean are likely to be two different things, so it's essential that you read between the lines.

♉ Taurus
April 21 - May 21
Attitude is everything, especially on the work front where you need to convince yourself that all things are possible. Your thoughts, more than ever today, will create your reality. Think success and you will be a success.

♊ Gemini
May 22 - June 21
You would be wise not to make any major decisions or announcements today. You may be bursting to tell the world about what you have done but you will get a much better response if you leave it a while.

♋ Cancer
June 22 - July 23
You are in danger of making something that is not that important appear bigger than it actually is. Your task today is to focus your mind on something that makes you feel good, something that lifts your spirits to new heights.

♌ Leo
July 24 - Aug. 23
Don't be too eager to make changes today because there is a lot you don't know. That applies to all areas of your life but especially to your work and career. Hints and gossip could easily mislead you.

♍ Virgo
Aug. 24 - Sept. 23
Most of the time, you put logic before emotion but today's aspects warn you could go right the other way and act on feelings alone. Will it pay off? Maybe not, exactly, but no great harm will come of it.

♎ Libra
Sept. 24 - Oct. 23
You will get conflicting information from people with different agendas today and there is no way of knowing who is telling the truth. Therefore, you must ignore everything and act only on what your inner voice tells you.

♏ Scorpio
Oct. 2 04 - Nov. 22
You are reading too much into a situation that is really quite simple. Not only that, but certain individuals are trying to influence your thinking to make you feel insecure. Don't let it happen. Believe in yourself.

♐ Sagittarius
Nov. 23 - Dec. 21
If knowledge is power then it stands to reason that the more knowledge you have about what is going on, the more power you have to influence the outcome. But don't give knowledge away or your power will fade.

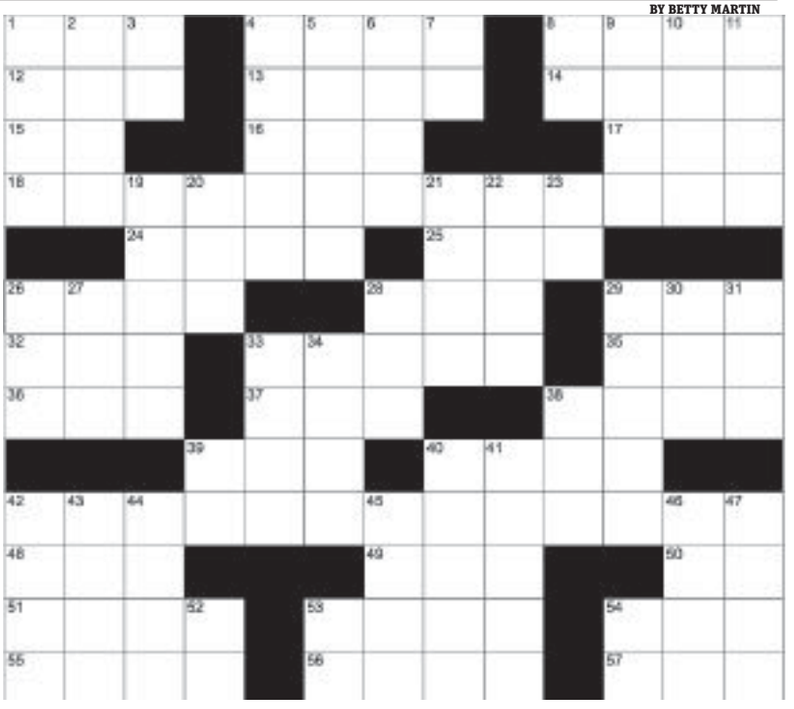
♑ Capricorn
Dec. 22 - Jan. 20
Someone will go out of their way to make life difficult for you today, but if you stay calm and refuse to react you will do your reputation a power of good. Always behave as if the world is watching you.

♒ Aquarius
Jan. 21 - Feb. 19
You could easily allow yourself to believe that you can do or say anything without repercussion, which is a dangerous attitude to take. Think before you act today. It could save you a lot of trouble.

♓ Pisces
Feb. 20 - March 20
You may think that by supporting certain causes you are doing good in the world but are you truly committed on a personal level? One cause above all oth ers is precious to you — give it your undivided attention. SALLY BROMPTON

Crossword

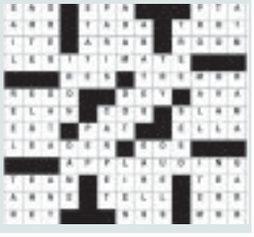
BY BETTY MARTIN



Across
1. Soft throw
4. Pull behind
8. Portico
12. French soul
13. Called up
14. TV executive Griffin
15. What Gloria called Edith
16. Invoice abbr.
17. Old model car
18. Rain or snow
24. Part of the eye
25. Tic tac toe win
26. Editing mark
28. Sanford and —
29. Coral reef
32. Summer cooler
33. Parisian school
35. Beer
36. Writing implement
37. Contented sighs
38. Elevator pioneer
39. —: Crime Scene Investigation
40. Rattle
42. Susan Lucci daytime soap (3 words)
48. Island welcome
49. Actor Wallach
50. "—the Right Thing"
51. Work on the street
53. General vicinity
54. Gun the engine
55. Olden sword
56. Workplace ogre, sometimes
57. Found on 39 across (abbr.)

Down
1. Desktop fixture
2. Actor Sharif
3. Who Wants to – a Millionaire?
4. Let the water out
5. Highway exits
6. Hostile
7. "I Will Survive" singer (init.)
8. Size before med. and lg.
9. Actress — Hatcher
10. Black and white cookie
11. Big name in cosmetics
19. Comic DeGeneres
20. So-so grade
21. Hammer or saw
22. First class (2 words)
23. "— Sir, With Love"
26. Drop bait lightly on the water
27. Dutch city
28. Distress call letters
29. Prepare food for a party
30. Living It Up! With — and Jack
31. Affirmative
33. Moderate
34. Elegant
38. This — House
39. She played Katherine Wellington on Harper's Island (init.)
40. Irritates
41. Assumed name
42. Swiss mountains
43. List
44. Inhabit
45. Medal recipient
46. Paradise
47. Star
52. Shoe width
53. Blood type
54. Host of '70s Family Feud (init.)

Yesterday's Crossword



What's online

See today's answers metronews.ca/answers.

Sudoku

How to play
Fill in the grid, so that every row, every column and every 3x3 box contains the digits 1-9. There is no math involved. You solve the puzzle using reasoning and logic.

		8			2			4
9				5				
		5				8	7	
1			2	7				5
3			5		6			9
2				3	1			7
	6	7				2		
				9				8
8			1			5		

Yesterday's Sudoku

Sharability

easy — hard

There are better ways to make your voice heard
What's the point of making a statement, giving a speech or even talking if no one is listening?
Join the METROPOLITAN PANEL and have your voice heard by the readership of the world's largest newspaper.
Metropolitan Panel is an online research panel dedicated to dialogue with you! When you participate, your voice joins thousands of others in 14 countries. Sign up for the panel at **metropolitanpanel.com,** choose your country and join the global conversation!
metropolitanpanel.com
Metropolitan
Panel